Talent Development and Creativity at the Prince Claus Conservatoire

Evert Bisschop Boele | 13-12-2017, Groningen

share your talent.
moving the world.
Talent – and where I come from

share your talent. move the world.
Talent Development...

"share your talent. move the world."
... and Creativity
Conservatoires studying Conservatoires
Ethnomusicologists studying Conservatoires

A Conservatory Cultural System

Henry Kingsbury

Heartland Excursions

Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music

Bruno Nettl
Studying for a job
Selection

- entrance examination – the ‘final exam’
- entrance: approx. 20% hit rate
- the jury format
- ‘intersubjective assessment’
- the struggle around criteria lists
- the struggle around being/becoming an examiner
- the ‘10’ and ‘cum laude’
The Young Talent Class

Young Talent Class Classical Music

The Young Talent Class Classical music is for talented students from around the age of 12. The programme comprises 3 components that can be put together in various ways:

1. Instrumental/principal study lessons from a conservatorium teacher: once a week or once a month
2. Theory lessons
3. Plus package for Excellent Talent

Main Instrument Lessons

The principal study lessons are given by conservatorium teachers, they are individual lessons and generally last 50 minutes. Depending on the recommendation you receive from the commission at the entrance examination, you will receive either monthly or weekly lessons. With weekly lessons you will also occasionally have ensemble lessons. Students of melody-instruments (strings, winds and singers) also have regular corperation lessons (lessons in playing together with a pianist).

Option: Theory Lessons

The conservatorium offers the possibility to follow theory lessons. You will receive a recommendation about this at the entrance examination. These lessons take place on Tuesdays at the end of the afternoon and the beginning of the evening. The theory lessons are given to groups of 4 students. At least twice a year we will look at your development and level, and if necessary we will adjust your lessons to best enhance your further development. The theory lessons are generally combined with weekly or monthly principal study lessons.

Plus Package Excellent Talent

Sometimes a student is exceptionally talented. In these cases it is possible to take a Plus Packet, subject to conditions and only after the approval of the head of department. Plus Packet students receive a 75 minute principal study lesson every week in place of 50 minutes. They also receive extra corperation lessons.

Preparatory Programme & Young Talent Class

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Avoiding the ‘T’-word?

“Studying at the Prince Claus Conservatoire means that you may expect from us to make every effort to guide you towards a fantastic musical career. And we need you to study hard in order to fulfill your own dreams. Whether you want to become a performing musician, an inspiring music teacher, a musical entrepreneur, a composer or a music researcher: it is only possible when we work hard to accomplish your ideals!”
Avoiding the ‘T’-word?


Nature - nurture
Prizes...

VNO-NCW Noord Talent Award

VNO-NCW Noord annually hands out the Talent Award to a young talent from northern Netherlands who stands out in the field of music or dance.

To foster cultural talent is essential for a healthy and flourishing region according to VNO-NCW Noord. With the award and the scholarship they want to contribute to this goal and broaden the horizon of a talented student.

Scholarship amount
Apart from the trophy and certificate the winner receives a scholarship of € 2,500,-

Criteria
- Applying for this scholarship is not possible.
- Candidates are being proposed by their main subject teacher.
- The Management Team of the Prince Claus Conservatoire selects a winner
- VNO-NCW Noord grants the scholarship.
- The scholarship students should be present during the annual gala where the award is being handed out.

Connect on social media

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... and prizes...

Ziv Taubenfeld wins the GasTerra Energizing Future Talent Award

Published on June 17, 2013

Bass clarinetist Ziv Taubenfeld is the winner of the Northern European Talent Contest, Thursday June 13 at the festival Swingin’ Groningen. He was the best of six finalists of international conservatories from Germany, Denmark, Russia, Estonia, Sweden and Groningen. The judges were impressed by the way Ziv was exploring the limits of his unusual instrument. "The vibe in the band was great, thanks to Ziv. And his version of 'So long Eric' was excellent", according to the judges. Taubenfeld, who also won the public award, is a second year student at Prince Claus Conservatoire. The contest was the opening of the three day open air jazz- and cross-over festival Swingin' Groningen.

Anton Buiks of GasTerra with Ziv on the right, handing over the award.

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... and prizes...

Peter the Great Festival

The Peter de Grote Festival is the largest chamber music festival of the Northern Netherlands. During ten days (inter)nationally acclaimed musicians perform in varied programmes in the city and the province of Groningen. Linked to this concert series young, talented musicians from all over the world come to Groningen to participate in the Summer Academy with master classes, chamber music lessons, and several performances.

Several money prizes are awarded yearly to the most talented participants by our sponsors:

Labberté-Hoedemaker Awards
Three awards of € 1,000 each.

Klaas Dijkstra Scholarship
One of the participants is awarded with this scholarship of 4 x €2,500 enabling him/her to study at Prince Claus Conservatoire for 4 years.

Foundation Friends of the Prince Claus Conservatoire
The foundation awards € 2,000 - to a participant with

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...and prizes...
... and even more prizes.
Looming at the background is:

the **performer** as the ultimate role model in (Western) music culture:

- **Craftsmanship** in talented instrumental performance
- combined with **Expressivity**
- leading to Works of Musical **Art**.

A societal **discourse**, not always expressed, but implicitly ‘there’ in (literally) powerful ways.
1-to-1-teaching

- the ‘heart of music education’
- (conducting? NAIP? Music education?)
- the centrality of the teacher
- ‘class’ – ‘studio’ – ‘studying with’
- lineage/pedigree

- changing teachers?
- team teaching as an innovation
Manja Smits became the first harpist to receive the Netherlands Music Prize (1993), the highest state award for classical music in the Netherlands.

She also was a prizewinner in the 'Torneo Internazionale di Musica' in Rome. (1998)

After her studies in the Netherlands she was granted a special scholarship from the Dutch Government to perfection her art with the famous late Prof. Vera Dulova at the Tschaikovski Conservatory in Moscow. She attended masterclasses with Pierre Jamet, Susann McDonald, Andrew-Lawrence King and Germaine Lorenzini.

Her repertoire ranges from Bach to Berio. She appeared on radio and television and is regularly invited to perform in prestigious festivals all over the world such as:

- the International Harp Festival in Fukui (Japan), the Rio Harp Festival (Brazil), Harpe Diem (Belgium), the Spring Harp days in Szeged (Hungary) and the World Harp Congress (Paris, Kopenhagen, Seattle, Genève, Amsterdam).

Also contemporary music has her special attention. She performed at the Berio ConSequenze Festival, the Gubaidulina Festival, the Holland Festival, the Flemish Chambermusic Festival (Belgium) and the 4th Festival 'Harp Art of Russia' (Moscow).

Several dutch composers dedicated new works for harp to her.

As a soloist she performed with a.o. Nieuw Sinfonietta Amsterdam, the three dutch Radio Orchestra's, the Gelders Orkest, Ensemble XXI (Moscow), Northwest Sinfonietta (USA), the London Festival Strings and 'Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss'.

She founded the Renoir Ensemble (flute, stringtrio, harp), The Holland Harp Trio (flute, viola, harp), 'Les Quatre' (violin, violoncello, harp, piano) and regularly appears in duo combinations such as viola/harp, soprano/harp, tenor/harp and flute/harp.
Coda: the PCC and the Hanze Honours Talent Programme

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Hanze Honours Talent Programme: the excellent professional
- societal challenges
- interdisciplinarity
- connection to research

... and the long road to an Honours Programme in the Prince Claus Conservatoire.
Operationalization of Talent

What is the view on talent within the conservatory? Do you think talent in music is something you are born with or something you can develop?

What do you think of creativity? Is talent in the conservatory the same as creativity?

What are the aspects/characteristics that someone needs to become a professional musician?
Selection of Talent

Do you account for potential for development in your selection process as well? Or do all applicants need at least some higher level of ability from the beginning?

How much weight do you give to technical skills in contrast to creativity in the selection procedure and how do you assess creativity?

What is the selection ratio at entrance auditions (how many students are picked out of how many applicants)?

In the article, it was suggested that there is reselection shortly after the official selection process which narrows down the pool of talent so that only a very small number of students receive the most stimulating opportunities for the development of their talents. Do you think conservatories could benefit from keeping the pool of talent broader throughout the whole course of study? If so, how could this be attained?

You say that you test talent in the entrance audition. Do you think you miss out on some great musicians by not selecting the less talented that could improve to greatly?
Judging Performance & Creativity

How do you score examinations during the studies?

If possible, how are performances of musicians compared to each other?

Is the development of the student over time or their final performance level more important?

How does a student’s ability to play several instruments well influence the judgment?

How important is it to be musically creative compared to performing well on well-known musical plays like "Für Elise"?

How are students' musical capabilities examined? When no consensus can be reached between teachers regarding a grade, how is this disagreement then solved?
Development of Performance

What development opportunities are given to the students?

How is the curriculum built to keep improving the talent, skills and performance of the students?

To what extent do students, during their studies, learn psychological skills that are important for success in the music world?
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